

But, as was only natural, popular missionaries, drawn from the people, speaking to the people and depending on the people for alms, were influenced by popular ideas. They failed to make Wycliffe's distinction between secular and clerical property. He meant them to preach against the payment of tithes, and they condemned the performance of villein services as well; he meant them to denounce the riches of a corrupt Church, and they introduced into their anathemas the riches of a corrupt aristocracy. A hostile satirist thus speaks of their double influence—

All stipends they forbid to give  
And tithes whereon poor  
curates live. From sinful lords  
their dues they take.; Bid serfs  
their services forsake.<sup>1</sup>

Such men were firebrands, and they set light to one stack more than Wycliffe wished. But they were most of them not the real Wycliffite missionaries. The Lollards who were brought to trial by the Church for spreading his heretical doctrines, were in no single case accused of having had hand or part in the Peasants' Rising. Similarly the indictments of the rebels contain no hint of heresy. The rebellion was not a Lollard movement, although some of the agitators were influenced by some of Wycliffe's ideas, and at Smithfield Wat Tyler is said to have demanded disendowment of the Church.<sup>2</sup> It is not unlikely that some of the Poor Priests entered zealously into the movement for abolishing serfage.<sup>3</sup>

Wycliffe's own view of the proper relations between master and servant he expressed so clearly that no doubt whatever can remain on the subject. He continually emphasised the rights of property and the duty of performing services even to sinful lords. It was part of his regular moral teaching to exhort all Christians to render legal dues without question of their equity.<sup>4</sup> His own theory of Dominion, so dangerous to the proprietary rights of the wicked, remained still-born in the \* *De Dominio Civili*,<sup>5</sup> and made no appearance in his later Latin works, or in any of his English tracts.

<sup>1</sup> *Pol. Poems*, i. 236. 'Vetant dari,' cfec.

<sup>2</sup> *Rot. Parl.*, iii. 124-5; *Fasc. Z.*, 273-4, is worthless as evidence. See H. B., 519, for the « Smithfield programme ».

» *S. E. W.*, iii. 147, 174, 207. \* *Matt.*, 227-8.